



Introducing Cat to a New Territory

Importance of Confinement

The setting at the shelter, the car ride home and meeting new people can add to your new cat's stress levels. When introducing your cat into a new home, he'll need time to adjust. Make the adjustment period shorter by allowing the cat to become accustomed to his new home slowly through confinement. Only once they are comfortable in their space can they feel comfortable eating, drinking, resting, and eliminating.



Confinement is especially crucial for shy or fearful cats as they may be overwhelmed when moving into a new home. Given free run of the house, a scared cat will often bolt around, looking for a safe place to hide. Cats can injure themselves running into furniture or walls in a panic. They may also hide somewhere unsafe, such as under the stove or inside a reclining chair and stay hidden for several days.

A safe room will allow your new cat a small space where he'll feel secure. The less worried he is, the more social he can become. Kittens especially benefit from an initial confinement to a small room or even to a large crate. This will provide time to kitten-proof the rest of the house. When left alone, a smaller kitten should be confined for three reasons:

1. It reinforces good litter box habits
2. It prevents accidents where the kitten might injure himself
3. It means no more searching for kittens hiding from view

When bringing a new cat into your home with resident cats, put the new cat in his "special" room for a few days, even a few weeks. This allows the resident cat(s) and the new cat to get to know each other via scent without having to see each other face to face.

You'll know the new cat is ready to explore more of the house when:

- He is performing his natural functions: eating, resting, grooming, using the litter box, etc
- He is responsive to petting and playing
- He is comfortable with normal activities in the room and is not afraid

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- He is showing interest in leaving the room

When possible, allow the new cat to expand his territory slowly, ideally one room at a time. If at any time the cat seems overwhelmed, return him to his safe room and try again later.

Don't feel bad about confining your new cat. It will help him relax and adjust to his new surroundings much quicker.

Setting up the Space

Your new cat's safe space should be a small, quiet room such as a bathroom, small office or large walk-in closet. Make sure the room does not have any hiding spots that might endanger him. A box tipped on its side with a towel often provides a good "hiding" spot for the cat to feel safe. A few days or even a few weeks will give your cat time to acclimate to the familiar sounds and smells in your home, before exploring other areas.

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